

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 87A-56

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other Russell G and Shirley B Watson Tobacco Barn

### 2. Location

street and number 15510 Bald Eagle School Road

not for publication

city, town Brandywine

vicinity

county Prince George's

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Russell G. & Shirley B. Watson, Sr.

street and number 15 800 Croom Road

telephone

city, town Brandywine

state MD

zip code 20613-7319

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

liber 145623 folio 675

city, town

tax map 158D4 tax parcel 28

tax ID number

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- . Contributing Resource in National Register District
- . Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- . Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- . Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- . Recorded by HABS/HAER
- . Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

#### Category

\_\_\_\_ district  
JC \_\_\_\_ building(s)  
\_\_\_\_ structure  
\_\_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_\_ object

#### Ownership

\_\_\_\_ public  
X \_\_\_\_ private  
\_\_\_\_ both

#### Current Function

\_\_\_\_ agriculture  
\_\_\_\_ commerce/trade  
\_\_\_\_ defense  
\_\_\_\_ domestic  
\_\_\_\_ education  
\_\_\_\_ funerary  
\_\_\_\_ government  
\_\_\_\_ health care  
\_\_\_\_ Industry

Jandscape  
\_\_\_\_ recreation/culture  
\_\_\_\_ religion  
\_\_\_\_ social  
\_\_\_\_ transportation  
\_\_\_\_ work in progress  
X \_\_\_\_ unknown  
\_\_\_\_ vacant/not in use  
other:

#### Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
_____	_____ Total

**Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory**

## 7. Description

Inventory No. 87A-56

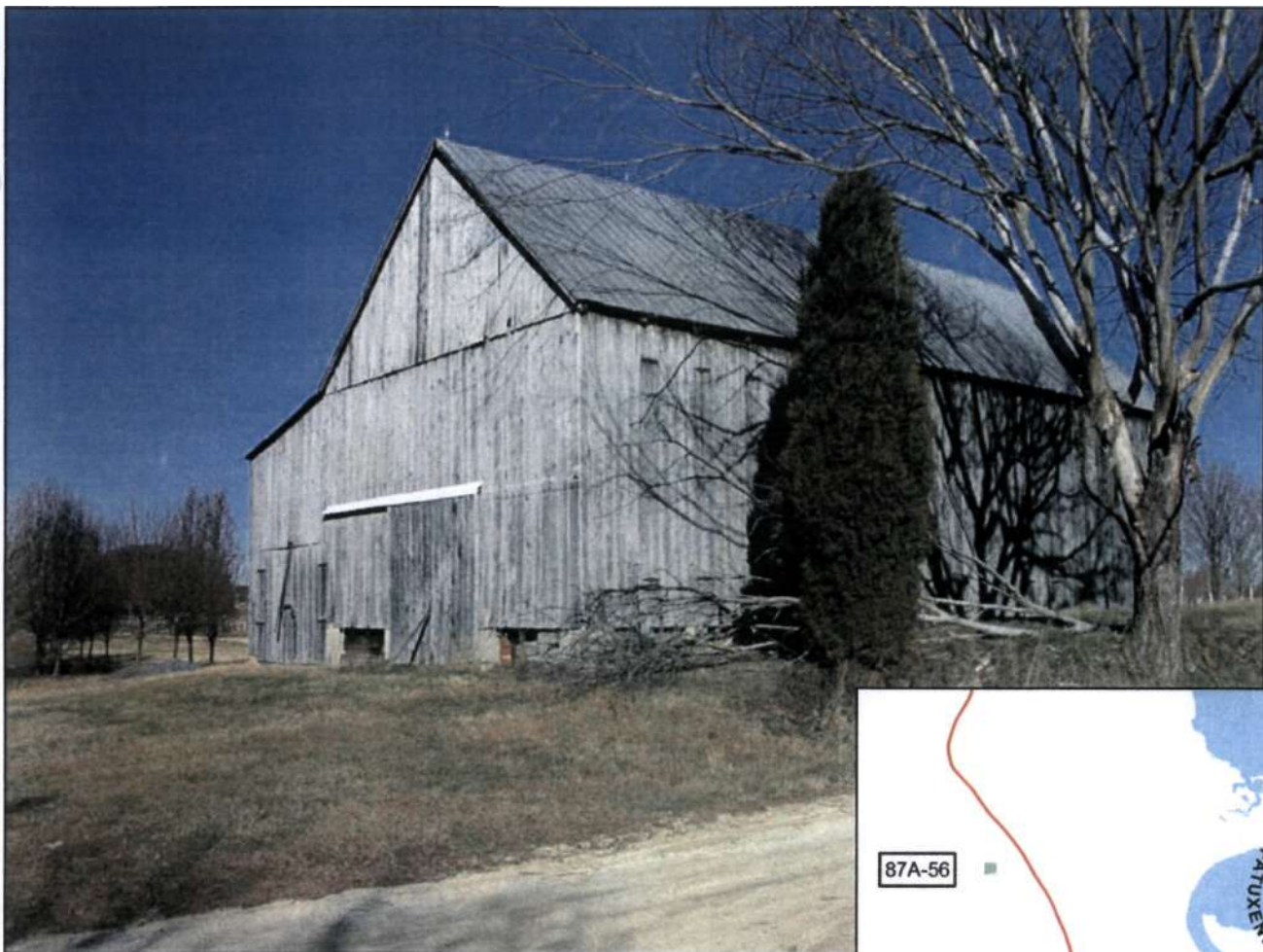
### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
X good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Sited to the west of Croom Road off a dirt lane near two other tobacco barns (87A-55, 87A-54), the Watson Tobacco Barn is sited at the top of a hill on an open grassy field. Two trees stand alongside the south elevation separating the barn from the dirt road.

Built c. 1900, the barn has a concrete-block pier foundation supporting a wood frame structural system clad in vertical circular sawn vertical boards. The gable and shed roof is covered with standing-seam metal and features overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. Hinged vertical air doors on the south and north elevations open outward to allow for air circulation throughout the barn. A sliding vertical board door on the east side allows for machinery to enter the barn. The west elevation also has a sliding door as well as a double-leaf vertical board wood door which provides access to the shed roof section of the barn.



## 8. Significance

Inventory No. 87A-56

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> military	other: _____

Specific dates                      c.1900    **Architect/Builder**      Unknown

**Construction dates**      c.1900

Evaluation for:

National Register    ☐ Maryland Register    not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

During the more than two centuries in which tobacco served as the money crop in Prince George's County, planters, indentured servants, slaves, and farmers developed utilitarian structures for tobacco curing and packing that have remained essentially the same to the present day. Early barns were square in plan and constructed of notched logs with open spaces between the logs to permit the circulation of air (a log dwelling had chinking and caulking between the logs to prevent the infiltration of air). Inside, scaffolding held the tobacco sticks with the leaves suspended from them in such a way as to allow air to flow over the drying tobacco to prevent mold. Farmers employing the fire-curing method lit small fires on the barn's earthen floor to lower the relative humidity (Percy 1979:33). The Prince George's County barns differed from those constructed in Virginia and North Carolina for the flue curing of bright-leaf tobacco, which employed a stove or firebox with a flue and require a different type of barn—one that was essentially airtight to hold the heat. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the increasing availability of sawn lumber enabled southern Maryland's farmers to construct timber-frame tobacco barns covered with wooden siding, usually vertical board siding. Southern Maryland's air cured tobacco utilized barns constructed with air doors along the sides that could be opened to facilitate the circulation of air. These air doors were three or four vertical boards fastened together and usually hinged that could be opened.

The earliest tobacco barns identified in the survey along Croom Road are the ca. 1820 Duvall Tobacco Barn (87A-31) and the 1800-1830 Watson Tobacco Barn (87A-55) and the most recent barns date to the middle of the twentieth century such as the Stielper (87A-48), Jackson (87A-47), and Chase (87A-44) tobacco barns. Although the dates of construction for the surveyed barns range over one hundred and thirty years, the construction materials, methods of construction, and form of the tobacco barn changed very little. All of the barns surveyed are wood-frame and clad in vertical boards; all of the barns contain four-foot by four-foot rooms to hang the tobacco; and all of the barns have hinged vertical board air doors to control the circulation of air within the barns. The changes in form are very minor but provide the most insight into the date of construction. Early nineteenth century barns have steeply pitched gable roofs. From about 1830 until 1900 the barns have more standardized gable roofs, sometimes with one side of the gable extended to create a shed roof over a stripping room. Around 1900, the use of tractors increased in Prince George's County and central double-leaf doors opening onto a wide central passage began to appear in the barn. The final form change was the advent of the gambrel roof, which created more space within the barn to hang tobacco. Gambrel roofs began to appear in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Watson Tobacco Barn, constructed circa 1900, is a significant as an example of a turn of the century Prince George's county tobacco barn and fits into the third period of tobacco barn construction. The asymmetrical gable roof was a distinctive feature of tobacco barns constructed between 1830 and 1900, but the large central and side doors providing access for machinery did not become common on Maryland tobacco barns until around 1900.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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David O. Percy, *The Production of Tobacco Along the Colonial Potomac. The National Colonial Farm Research Report No. 1, Agricultural History Series* (Accokeek, Md.: The Accokeek Foundation, 1979), 10-11.]

National Register of Historic Places, Red Fox Farm, Mecklenburg Co., Va., File 58-131, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Calvert County Historic District Commission, "Tobacco Barns Calvert County Maryland," Prince Frederick, Md: Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1991), brochure.

## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 74.7841

Acreage of historical setting

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_ Quadrangle scale: Lower Marlboro

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title J. Shafagoj, Architectural Historian

organization Ashley Neville, LLC

date March 1, 2006

street & number 11311 Cedar Lane

telephone 804.798.2124

city or town Glen Allen

state VA

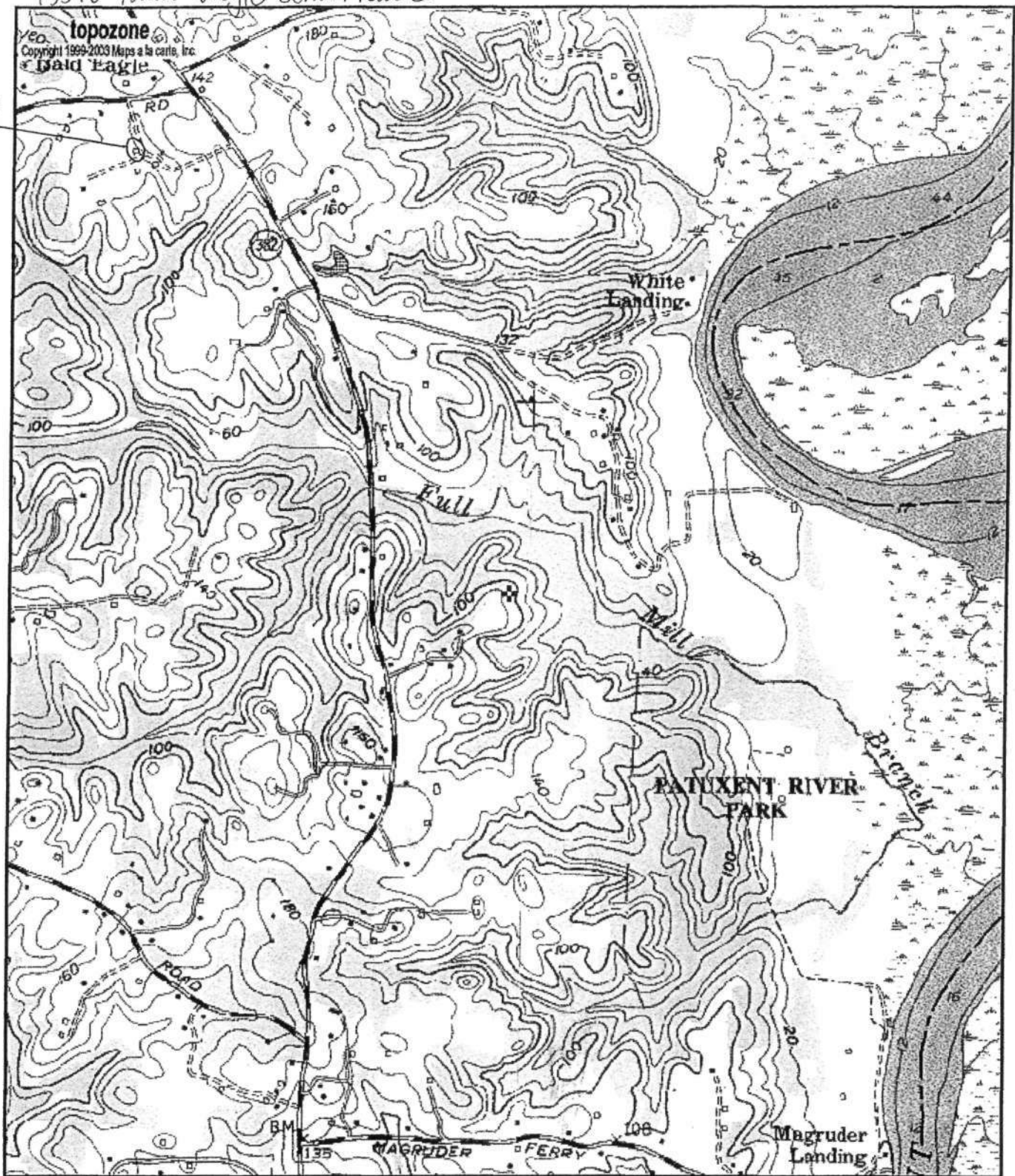
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

Russell G and Shirley B Watson Tobacco Barn  
15510 Bald Eagle School Road

PG:  
87A-56



0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 1.5 km  
0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 mi

UTM 18 351323E 4280522N (NAD83/WGS84)  
**USGS Lower Marlboro (MD) Quadrangle**  
Projection is UTM Zone 18 NAD83 Datum



H=-10.991  
G=-1.068